CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

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Quick Facts about Medicare's New Coverage for Prescription Drugs If You Applied for Extra Help

You've applied for extra help with Medicare prescription drug costs using Social Security's application, so what happens next?

Social Security will begin processing applications for extra help on July 1, 2005. If your online or paper application is not complete, Social Security will call you or write to you asking for the missing information. Your application will be processed as quickly as possible, and you will receive a letter in the mail telling you if you qualify.

What do I need to know?

- Applying for extra help is just one step. You still need to join a Medicare prescription drug plan to get Medicare prescription drug coverage.
- Even if you don't qualify for extra help, you should still consider joining a Medicare prescription drug plan. If you join a Medicare prescription drug plan, Medicare pays about half of your prescription drug costs, even without any extra help.
- You can join a Medicare prescription drug plan November 15, 2005 through May 15, 2006, but the sooner you join the sooner you'll start saving money on your prescription drug costs. If you join a plan by December 31, 2005, your coverage will begin January 1, 2006. If you join after January 1, 2006, your coverage starts the first of the month after the month you join.

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How can I get more information?

If you need more information about your application for extra help,

- call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
- visit www.socialsecurity.gov on the web.

If you haven't yet applied for extra help with your Medicare prescription drug costs, you should know that many people will receive an application for extra help in the mail. If you think you qualify, fill it out and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Also, Social Security has a tool available online where you can see if you may qualify for help with your prescription drug costs. In addition to the tool, beginning July 1, 2005, you can apply for the extra help online.

For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage,

- read the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook that you get in the mail in October 2005.
- visit www.medicare.gov on the web. Select "Search Tools" to get personalized information.
- call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see your copy of the "Medicare & You 2006" handbook for their telephone number).
- call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- look for local Medicare-related events.

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